

Subject: Communication with SSA

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On April 24, 2006, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) issued an EFlash concerning the implementation of SSA's new garnishment system, the Court Order Garnishment System (COGS). We noted that in the March conversion of 180,000 existing cases to the new system, some states reported that in some instances the amount of the payment being withheld had changed (higher or lower than the amounts previously withheld.) SSA is continuing to review these cases to determine the reasons for the changes.

In the EFlash, OCSE included names and email addresses of regional SSA staff who could be contacted for assistance in dealing with specific cases affected by the conversion to COGS. The intention behind providing SSA regional staff contacts was to facilitate resolution of inquiries regarding recent payment changes due to the COGS conversion; however, state and county child support workers began contacting these individuals seeking assistance on a wide range of issues. SSA regional staff were not prepared to receive or respond to this large volume of inquiries, and as a result this has impacted their ability to respond on individual cases in a timely fashion.

Effective immediately, child support workers should contact their local field offices for cases where a child support payment appears to have been changed as a result of the conversion to COGS. Workers should provide the name, case ID, and other information necessary to identify the case, including the amounts of the payment before and after the conversion. Workers may provide the Social Security number (SSN) of the appropriate noncustodial parent to the field office when making contact via telephone or fax. **Under no circumstances should an individual's Social Security number be included in an email message.** Where necessary, the SSA field office staff will contact the appropriate SSA regional staff person for assistance.

If you have attempted to contact the field office but have not received a status response within two business days, you should notify OCSE at the following email address: [ssacogsissues@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:ssacogsissues@acf.hhs.gov). We will work with SSA to ensure that the matter is resolved. (Email messages to OCSE also should not include Social Security numbers.) If necessary, OCSE will contact the child support worker and provide a fax number for SSN's and other pertinent information. These procedures are intended to be in place for the short term only.

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Visit the "Employer Services" website, a wealth of child support information for all employers: [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse) Click on Information for Employers.